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Message Text

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ACTION AID-05

INFO OCT-01 AF-06 EUR-12 ISO-00 OES-03 EB-07 FEA-01

CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05

PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 OMB-01 TRSE-00 IGA-01

AGR-05 COME-00 /086 W
---------- 076437
R 101640Z APR 75
FM AMEMBASSY BAMAKO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1198
INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN
AMEMBASSY PARIS

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: ML
SUBJ: MEETING WITH PRESIDENT - AID MATTERS

REF: A. STATE 046007; B. BAMAKO 1031

1. AT HIS REQUEST I CALLED ON PRESIDENT MOUSSA TRAORE ON APRIL 4 FOR A GENERAL TOUR D'HORIZON OF U.S. ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS AND MINISTER OF DEFENSE DOUKARA'S VISIT TO THE U.S. THE PRESIDENT WAS PARTICULARLY INTERESTED IN THE BAMAKO-BOUGOUNI ROAD, THE VALLEE DU SERPENT CANAL, SCIENTIFIC EQUIPMENT FOR THE HTTC AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF A ROAD FROM SEVARE TO GAO.

2. THE PRESIDENT OPENED THE DISCUSSION BY SAYING THE U.S.-MALIAN RELATIONS WERE EXCELLENT AND WERE IMPROVING EVERY DAY. HE AGAIN EXPRESSED HIS PERSONAL APPRECIATION, THAT OF THE MILITARY COMMITTEE FOR NATIONAL LIBERATION, AND THE PEOPLE OF MALI FOR THE GENEROUS ASSISTANCE OF THE UNITED STATES DURING THE DROUGHT; "GREATER THAN ANY OTHER DONOR." HE MADE A PARTICULAR POINT OF THANKING THE UNITED STATES
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FOR MAKING THE RECENTLY CONCLUDED ERTS CONFERENCE POSSIBLE AND FOR MY STATEMENT (DRAFTED BY PAO) AT THE CONFERENCE.

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HE ALSO STRESSED THE GREAT HOPES THAT MALI IS PINNING ON
THE TEXACO EXPLORATIONS NORTH OF TIMBUCTU, SAYING THAT
MALI DOES NOT WANT OIL IN ORDER TO JOIN IN AN EMBARGO
AGAINST THE WEST, BUT RATHER TO TRY TO LIFT MALI OUT OF
ITS MISERABLE POVERTY. (COMMENT: TEXACO REP BAMAKO SAYS
THAT MALIAN COOPERATION WITH TEXACO HAS BEEN EXEMPLARY.)
THE PRESIDENT COMMENTED ON HOW MANY CLOSE AMERICAN FRIENDS
HE HAS, MENTIONING SPECIFICALLY MR. DALY, HEAD OF WORLD
AIRWAYS. I EXPRESSED OUR APPRECIATION FOR MINISTER
DOUKARA'S VISIT TO THE UNITED STATES (REF STATE 046007).
THE PRESIDENT THEN TURNED TO THE FOLLOWING SPECIFIC ASSISTANCE
PROJECTS.

3. BAMAKO-BOUGOUNI ROAD

THE PRESIDENT REEMPHASIZED THE HIGH PRIORITY THE GOM
GIVES TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF THIS ALTERNATIVE ROUTE FOR THE
IMPORT AND EXPORT OF COMMODITIES TO ABIDJAN. I EXPLAINED
TO THE PRESIDENT THAT THE GREAT INCREASE IN COSTS OVER
THE ORIGINAL PROJECT HAD MADE IT IMPOSSIBLE FOR US TO
CARRY IT THROUGH AS ORIGNALLY PLANNED. I REVIEWED THE
CONGRESSIONAL SITUATION FOR HIM AND THEN DESCRIBED THE
PRESENT IDEA OF REHABILITATING BRIDGES ON THE ROUTE AND
THE ENLARGEMENT OF THE ROAD FROM BAMAKO TO SENOU.(BAMAKO 1031).
HIS CHEF DE CABINET OUMAR MAKALOU, WHO WAS PRESENT,
EXPLAINED THAT THE GOM IS GOING TO SEND A TEAM TO THE U.S.
TO DISCUSSTHIS AND VARIOUS OTHER PROJECTS WITH USAID AND
INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS SUCH AS THE WORLD BANK. SEPTEL
FOLLOWS. THE PRESIDENT WAS CLEARLY DISAPPOINTED AT OUR IN-
ABILITY TO CARRY THROUGH THE PROJECT AS ORIGINALLY PROPOSED.

4. VALLEE DU SERPENT

THE PRESIDENT REFERRED TO PREVIOUS DISCUSSIONS WE HAD HAD
ON THIS SUBJECT, AND SAID THAT HE UNDERSTOOD THAT A NEW
TECHNICAL SURVEY TEAM WAS COMING TO EXAMINE THE PROJECT.
HE SAID HE HAD INSTRUCTED THE MINISTER OF DEFENSE TO
PROVIDE THIS SURVEY TEAM ALL POSSIBLE ASSISTANCE AND TO
ENSURE THAT THEY COULD VISIT THE SITE OF THE PROJECT.
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I SAID THAT I KNEW THERE HAD BEEN SOME DISCUSSION OF
ADDITIONAL EXAMINATION OF THE PROJECT, BUT THAT I HAD NO
INFORMATION ON THE ARRIVAL OF A TEAM. I SAID IT IS TRUE THAT
BASED ON SUCH EXAMINATION AS HAS TAKEN PLACE TO DATE
THERE ARE DOUBTS IN WASHINGTON AS TO THE FEASIBILITY OF
THE PROJECT. IN ANY EVENT, I SAID, I FELT I MUST FRANKLY
STATE THAT THERE WAS ALMOST NO POSSIBILITY OF THE UNITED
STATES UNDERTAKING ANY FINANCIAL SUPPORT OF AN INFRASTRUCTURE
PROJECT OF THIS SORT. PRESIDENT WAS OBVIOUSLY DOWNCAST AT
THIS STATEMENT. HE RESPONDED THAT OF COURSE PROJECT WAS

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FEASIBLE, AS WOULD BE CLEAR TO ANY ONE WHO VISITED AREA.
HE SAID, HOWEVER, THAT HE COULD NOT UNDERSTAND WHY THE
UNITED STATES WAS WILLING TO HELP MALI ON AN EMERGENCY BASIS,
FOR WHICH HE WAS VERY GRATEFUL, BUT WAS NOT WILLING TO HELP
MALI HELP ITSELF. HE BELIEVED THAT PERHAPS THERE WAS SOME
APPREHENSION IN THE UNITED STATES THAT MALI WAS UNABLE TO
MAKE USE OF DEVELOPMENT AID, A FEELING THAT PERHAPS AROSE
AS A RESULT OF THE U.S. EXPERIENCE WITH THE FORMER REGIME
IMMEDIATELY AFTER INDEPENDENCE WHEN THE U.S. HAD BEEN
WILLING TO PROVIDE DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE, BUT FOR CERTAIN

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AGR-05 COME-00 /086 W
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R 101640Z APR 75
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REASONS THE PREVIOUS GOVERNMENT WAS NOT ABLE TO USE THE
AID OFFERED. NOW, ON THE OTHER HAND, MALI WISHES TO
DEVELOP ITSELF, AND THE U.S. WILL NOT HELP. I SAID THAT
MOST CERTAINLY SUCH WAS NOT THE CASE, THAT THERE WAS NO
LACK OF U.S. INTEREST IN MALI AS EVIDENCED BY THE PROGRAMS
WE ARE CURRENTLY UNDERTAKING, SUCH AS LIVESTOCK, CEREALS,
R&R, ETC., BUT THAT THERE WERE CERTAIN RESTRICTIONS ON
THE TYPES OF PROJECTS WE COULD DO AND OUR RESOURCES WERE
LIMITED. HE WAS CLEARLY UNCONVINCED.

5. OTHER PROJECTS

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THE PRESIDENT ASKED ABOUT SCIENTIFIC EQUIPMENT FOR THE
HIGHER TEACHER TRAINING COLLEGE, WHICH I SAID WAS ON ORDER.
HE ALSO RAISED THE QUESTION OF THE SEVARE-GAO ROAD. I
SAID I WAS AWARE OF MALIAN
INTEREST IN SUCH A ROAD BUT I
WAS UNAWARE OF ANY PROJECT. (COMMENT: I SUBSEQUENTLY LEARNED
THAT THE FRG HAS AGREED TO DO A STUDY OF THE ROAD, BUT
BECAUSE OF THE ESTIMATED COST, UPWARD OF $30 MILLION,
HAS NO INTENTION OF FINANCING THE PROJECT.)
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6. CONVERSATION THEN TURNED TO MALI-UPPER VOLTA BORDER
DISPUTE WHICH IS SUBJECT OF SEPTEL.

7. COMMENT: PRESIDENT WAS NOT IN BUOYANT MOOD AND WAS
SOMEWHAT DISAPPOINTED AT MY RESPONSES, PARTICULARLY WITH
RESPECT TO BAMAKO-BOUGOUNI ROAD AND VALLEE DU SERPENT.
ALSO, THERE IS A GROWING AWARENESS THAT U.S. AND MALIAN
PRIORITIES ARE NOT NECESSARILY CONGRUENT. AS THEY HAVE
STATED SEVERAL TIMES, THEIR ORDER OF PRIORITIES ARE WATER
CONTROL, HIGHWAY DEVELOPMENT (PARTICULARLY TO REDUCE THEIR
DEPENDENCE ON DAKAR-BAMAKO RAILROAD) AND FOOD PRODUCTION,
WHEREAS OURS EMPHASIZE PRODUCTION AND IMMEDIATE IMPACT ON
MOST AFFECTED POPULATION. WE WOULD HOPE THAT WHEN SOME OF
OUR PROJECTS MOVE INTO IMPLEMENTATION PHASE, THIS MALAISE WILL
BE DISPELLED.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS, FOREIGN ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 10 APR 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: MorefiRH
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975BAMAKO01364
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750125-0531
From: BAMAKO
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750464/aaaacgxk.tel
Line Count: 201
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION AID
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 STATE 046007, 75 BAMAKO 1031
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: MorefiRH
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 15 MAY 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <15 MAY 2003 by izenbei0>; APPROVED <15 MAY 2003 by MorefiRH>
Review Markings:

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05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: MEETING WITH PRESIDENT - AID MATTERS
TAGS: MASS, PFOR, ML, US, (TRAORE, MOUSSA)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006